



FRONT OFFICE OPERATIONS

1ST EDITION



MARNI BINTI MD. ZALI
MAS AZLINA BINTI MOHD ALIAS

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e-book version

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Writer

Marni Binti Md. Zali

Mas Azlina Binti Mohd Alias

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Preface

The Front Office Department plays a vital role in the daily operations of hotels. This department is responsible for handling the guests and acts as the hotel representative to ensure every guest's inquiries, needs and wants will be fulfilled. The Front Office Department's biggest challenge is to make sure that every guest and clients that comes to the hotel is satisfied during their stay and to welcome them back in the next future which to encourage hotel brand loyalty.

This e-book covers four crucial topics in delivering the fundamentals of front office operations. Simple language usage and style of writing enables our readers to comprehend and understand well on each topic.

As lecturers with many years' teaching experience in this field, we are honoured to share our knowledge and expertise with all students, academicians, industry players and valuable readers.

We are hoping through the publication of this e-book that it will equip everyone with the essential knowledge about the front office operations and we are welcoming any future networking and collaborative efforts on this matter of interest.



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TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION TO FRONT OFFICE DEPARTMENT



Introduction to Front Office Department

The Front Office Department is the most important department in hotel operations. It is the nerve centre for hotel operations as daily activities such as guest check in, check out, inquiries and complaints happen at the front counter. Other than that, front office acts as an interface between a hotel and its guests. In many situations, guests make first contact with the front office department. It is also the first place that can make guest develop an impression about the level of service, standard, facilities and hospitality of the hotel.

In front office department, communication and accounting are the most important functions of the front desk operation. The functions of accounting are crucial as front office department handle several procedures involving the acceptance of cash payment, handling credit card payment, acceptance of advance booking for hotel room and settlement of guest bills at the time of check-out. Communication is another crucial element in front office. Front office staff needs to communicate with the guest in order to process guest reservation. Such information needed are guest name, address, telephone number, number of stay, types of room needed and any special request. Besides that, front office staffs are also responsible in handling guest reception during the check-in and check-out.

TOPIC 1 : Introduction to Front Office Department

The front office staffs play a vital role in communicating and fulfilling any inquiries from the guests especially about hotel latest promotions, internet facilities, safe deposit service, restaurant outlet, spa operation hours, nearby ATM machine or even the nearest convenience shop. Communication also happens during guest check-in and check-out. Other than communicating with the guest, front office staffs also need to communicate well with the staffs from other department. It is important in order to ensure the room status is maintain and updated. The front office department is the focal point of contact for the spreading of information for guest and other hotel employees.

In many hotel operations, the front office department normally operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year without any failed. There are three (3) main shifts in front office department:

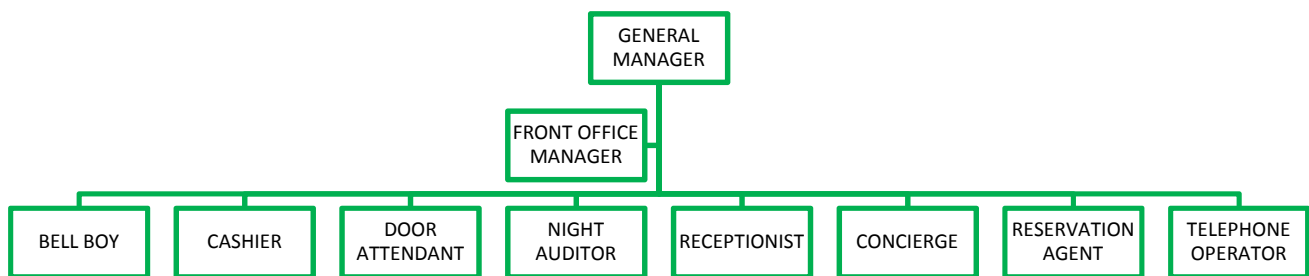
- ☐ **Morning shift** (normally start at 7.00 am until 3.00 pm)
- ☐ **Evening shift** (normally start at 3.00 pm until 11.00 pm)
- ☐ **Night shift** (normally start at 11.00 pm until 7.00 am)



THE FRONT OFFICE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The organizational structure of front office department are varies from one hotel to another hotel. It is depending on the size and styles of the operation of the hotel. So every hotel is special and unique in their own way. The organizational structure of front office department can be categories into:

- ☐ Small size hotel
- ☐ Medium size hotel
- ☐ Large size hotel

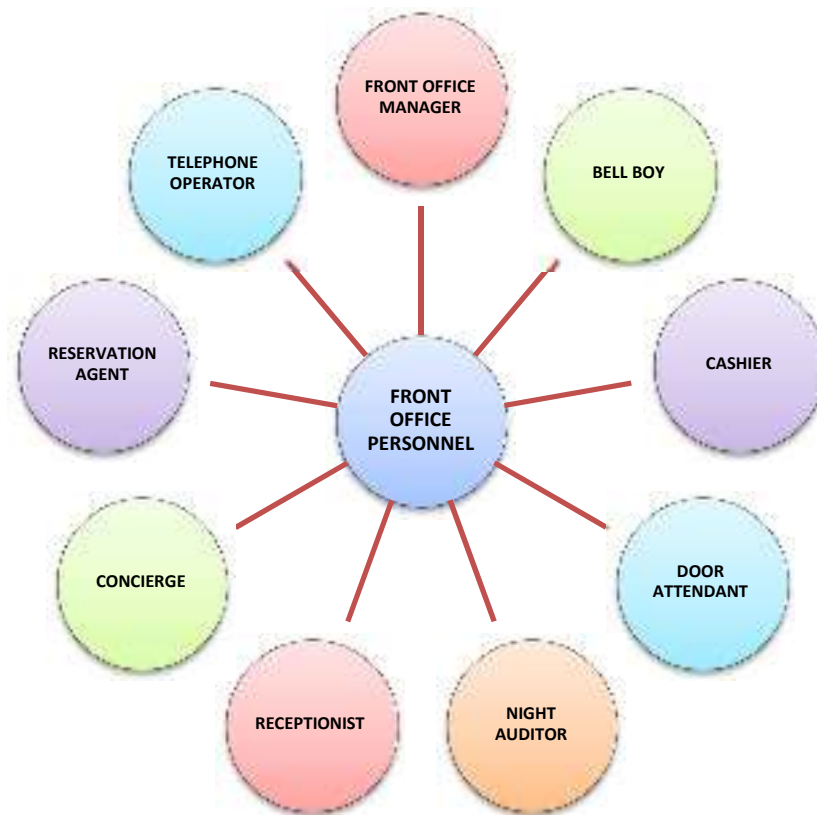


Example of Front Office Organizational Chart in Large Size Hotel

TOPIC 1 : Introduction to Front Office Department

THE DUTIES OF FRONT OFFICE PERSONNEL

The hotel requires many manpower in order to ensure smooth daily operation. Each staffs play their roles of ensuring only the best service and quality delivered to the hotel valuable guests and clients. There are nine essential duties of Front Office Personnel in the Front Office Department.



Duties of Front Office Personnel in the Hotel

TOPIC 1 : Introduction to Front Office Department

1) Front Office Manager

The front office manager direct and coordinate the activities of the front office department. Besides that, front office manager perform the function of a link between the management and front office employees where he attends meeting with the general Manager and other Head of Department (HOD). Front office manager also responsible for hiring, training, supervising and disciplinary all front desk, reservation, and guest services staff members in order to maintain the desired standard of service. In order to ensure smooth daily operation, the front office manager prepares the budget for the department. Front office manager is also responsible to evaluate the job performance of each front office employees under his authority.



2) Receptionist

A receptionist is a very important image of the hotel. It is because a receptionist is the first person to come in contact with the guests at the time of arrival. Receptionist is also responsible to make a good first and last impression. Besides that, they are entirely responsible to deliver high service quality in order to ensure guest satisfaction. Other major duties and responsibilities of a receptionist are as below:

- ☐ Greeting the guest by wishing ***“Salam Sejahtera”*** , ***“Good Evening Sir/ Madam”*** or any other suitable greeting
- ☐ Handling special request for example; the guest request to have a room with view, bedding, bed and breakfast, baby cot and others
- ☐ Handling check-in and check-out and providing information to guest when asked
- ☐ Assigning rooms and dispensing guest room keycards
- ☐ Check room availability for walk-in guest or telephone inquiries
- ☐ Inform the housekeeping department about check-out, late check-out, early check-in and any special request
- ☐ Work closely with housekeeping department in term of coordinating the room status update
- ☐ Post all credit charges to the guest folios
- ☐ Handle reservation



3) Cashier

In daily hotel operation, it is the responsibility of a front desk cashier to keep the guest folio updated by posting all credit and debit transaction. Other major duties and responsibilities of a cashier are as below:

- ☐ Receiving payment
- ☐ Balancing guest account
- ☐ Opening and maintaining the guest folios
- ☐ Recording all credit charges in guest folios
- ☐ Preparing bills at the time of check-out
- ☐ Handling credits/debit/charge cards for the settlement of a guest account
- ☐ Administer the safe deposit system
- ☐ Handling foreign currency

4) Reservation Agent

A reservation agent process the reservation requests obtained through telephone, email, letter and fax. A reservation agent will put reservation request on waitlist or they have to reject it due to room unavailability upon the date request as well as the types of room. Other major duties and responsibilities of a reservation agent are as below:

- ☐ Handling guaranteed and non-guaranteed reservation
- ☐ Practice up selling the guest room
- ☐ Prepare the expected arrival list and the expected departure list every day
- ☐ Prepare a guest folder and to keep the mails and messages of guest with reservation documents
- ☐ Providing management information to other department

5) Night Auditor

A night auditor is an individual who are responsible to audit the hotel account on daily basis usually at night or at a time when the business is relatively slow. The night audit is conducted in every hotel in order to maintain an accurate and efficient accounting system that keeps proper records of all the transaction happened during the day. Other major duties and responsibilities of a night auditor are as below:

- ☐ Preparing the night audit report
- ☐ Handle check-in and check-out guest who arrive or depart after 11.00 p.m
- ☐ Processing the reservations
- ☐ Performing the duties of security guard
- ☐ Monitoring the fire safety system
- ☐ Act as cashier for banquet function
- ☐ Performing the duties of manager on duty



6) Concierge

A concierge is a hotel staff who provides information and personalized services to the guest. A concierge is also known as “Mr. Know Everything” as their job scope often expected to achieved the impossible, dealing with any request from the guest by relying on an wide-ranging list of personal contacts of various local merchants and service provider. In addition, a Concierge need to know well about what happening inside and outside of the hotel and the surroundings. Other major duties and responsibilities of a concierge are as below:

- ☐ Making suggestion and recommendation of interesting place to visit, local food to try and activities to do
- ☐ Making reservations for dining at famous restaurant and café
- ☐ Arranging tours, limousine, and entertainment ticket
- ☐ Maintaining good relationship with hospitality industry
- ☐ Also a personal helper to VIP
- ☐ Obtaining tickets for theatres, musicals, concert, live show and many more
- ☐ Provide the guest with latest information of events surrounding



Melaka Riverside Cafes



Island Hopping by Chartered Boat

7) Bell Boy

Bell boy helps in handling guest luggage at the time of arrival and departure. Other than that, Bell boy helps in traffic control at hotel entrance and escorting the guests to their rooms on arrival. The bell boy need to brief and familiarizing the guests about the safety features and in-room facilities. He is also responsible to provide information to the guest about hotel facilities and services when asked.

8) Door Attendant

A door attendant is among the first individual to greet the guest on their arrival. Besides that, a door attendant is the person who responsible to open the door of the guest's vehicles. He is also responsible to greet and helps guest to opens the hotel's main entrance door. Other than that, door attendant help bell boy in lifting the luggage and coordinate with parking attendant for parking guests' vehicles in the hotels' parking area.



9) Telephone Operator

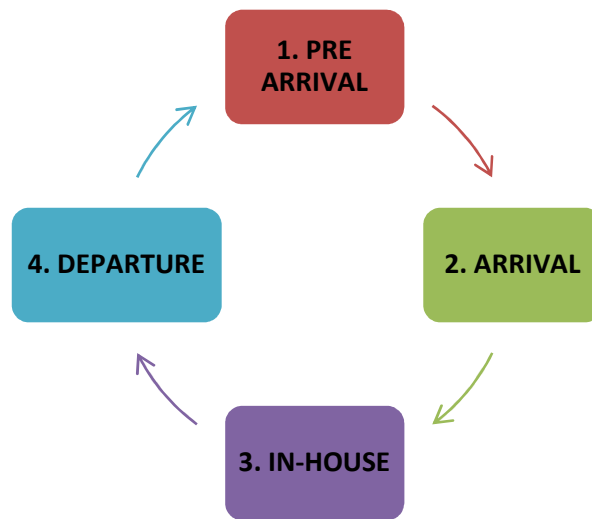
A telephone operator also plays a vital image of the hotel although they might not in directly contact with the guest. Among the skills needed to become a good telephone operator are; pleasant and courteous voice tone, clear and distinct speaking and active listener. Other major duties and responsibilities of a telephone operator are as below:

- ☐ Processing all incoming and outgoing calls
- ☐ Log all wake-up call on the system
- ☐ Answer questions about the hotel's services and product
- ☐ Taking message
- ☐ Operating hotel paging system
- ☐ Coordinate incoming calls to the desired extension
- ☐ Provide paging services for guest and employee



THE GUEST CYCLE STAGE

The guest cycle stage displays the activities happened starting from the day of the guest making the reservation of their stay at the hotel until they depart or check-out from the hotel.



The Guest Cycle Stage

1) Pre Arrival

Before the arrival, the guest usually makes their room reservation at their selected hotel. The guest may book their stay through online booking such as Agoda, Trivago, Trip.com, Booking.com and many more. The guest may also directly call the hotel or even making room reservation through email.

2) Arrival

On the day of the guest's arrival, the front office staff will prepare the guest registration form so that the registration process at the counter will happen fast and efficiently. It is so important to ensure fast guest's registration process in order to avoid the guest waiting too long. Other activity may includes assigning the room, issuing the room keycard and luggage handling.

3) In-house

While the guest is enjoying their stay in the hotel, the front office staff needs to maintain the guest account whereas during this stage, the guest may request for room service, visiting the spa, having candle light dinner at the restaurant, sending request for laundry service, making outside call or even using the mini bar . Other activities may also include are paging and traveling assistance, handling safe deposit and currency exchange.

4) Departure

On the date of the guest's departure, the front office staff must be readily prepare the guest bills and settlement of guest's account. Other activity may include transportation service such as taxi service to transport the guest to the intended location and future reservation. At this stage, the front office staff play important role to ensure the guest always happy and satisfied even though they are leaving the hotel because the guest last impression toward the hotel will remains in their memories. If the guest is happy with their pervious stay at the hotel, they will surely come back for more.

TOPIC 1 : Introduction to Front Office Department

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. There are **THREE (3)** main working shift for a Front Office personnel (staff).
List all the shift that will be scheduled for the staff.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
2. _____ is responsible to audit the hotel account on daily basis especially at night. He/she also responsible to perform duties of Manager On Duty (MOD).
3. The front office personnel (staff) need to prepare _____ on the day the guest should check out from their room.
4. State **THREE (3)** types of guest reservation method.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. List **FOUR (4)** job position for a well structured front office department.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____





TOPIC 2:

THE ROLE OF FRONT OFFICE IN RELATION TO OTHER DEPARTMENT



The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

Interdepartmental communication is important for proper coordination among various departments in the hotel establishment. Every department plays their role by gathering and sharing information with one another in order to plan and implement daily tasks and to ensure smooth hotel operation. The front office department plays a crucial role in delivering the highest quality of services to the guest. The front office department also communicates guest's requirement and other various kinds of information to other departments. Thus, in order to ensure the guest is always satisfied with the service that they received or their visit at the hotel is a pleasant one, effective interdepartmental communications is important things to take care of. The front office department is the center point of a hotel operation which communicate with other department namely housekeeping department, food and beverage department, account department, sales and marketing department, maintenance department, security department, sport and recreation department and customer service department.

TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department



Front Office Interdepartmental Communication

TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

1) The role of Front Office department with Housekeeping department

As room generates maximum revenue for the hotels, the information about the room status should be updated correctly and frequently in the system. The front office department must closely coordinate on the room status. The housekeeping department is responsible of cleaning the rooms and prepares an occupancy report which is sent to the front office department. The report must be tallied with room status records of front desk. The room status reports help to:

- ☐ Update the room status
- ☐ Find sleepers
- ☐ Know the exact house count or total number of in-house guest
- ☐ Charge the guest if any extra person has occupied the room
- ☐ Coordinate the guest room charge

For security concerns, the housekeeping department should inform the front office about any unusual circumstances that may indicate a violation of security for the hotel guests. Other than that, housekeeping department is responsible to arrange special arrangement such as guests request for additional or special amenities during their stay. The front office staff should conveyed the request to the housekeeping department.



TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

2) The role of Front Office department with Food and Beverage department

The front office department informs the food and beverages department about the total number of guest arrival and departure everyday. This information help food and beverages department to plan their work schedule and staff requirement. It also notified the food and beverages department about special food arrangement and parties. Other than that, food and beverage department needs front office staff to provide information to the guests about the restaurant operating hours, food and beverage menu and latest promotion and the location of coffee house in the hotel. Besides that, front desk sends to food and beverages department information about setting up bars in VIP rooms, special arrangement like fruit basket, in-house and expected VIP's and corporate guests, in-house and expected groups, in-house and expected crews as well as groups and guests with booking of special meal plans.



TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

3) The role of Front Office department with Account department

Accounts department is an important support department for the front office department since large number of financial transaction with guests happens at the front desk counter every day. During the guest stay, they use hotel facilities and services such as bedrooms, restaurant, laundry service, visiting the spa and room service. Charges will be made for the facilities and services that the guest use. All financial transactions will be recorded by the cashier at the front desk. The front desk also provides the financial data for billing and maintenance of credit card ledgers.



TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

4) The role of Front Office department with Sales and Marketing department

The front office department gain benefit from all the activities carried by the sales and marketing department because it can increase their room sales. Marketing strategies made by the sales and marketing department depend on the guest history recorded by the front office. This history record of frequent and corporate guest is needed so as to create an effective promotion approach to the previous and potential guests. The sales and marketing executives may have to check the room availability, in three (3) months, six (6) months or even twelve (12) months in future to develop an appropriate marketing strategies for low season period. This information helps sales and marketing department to sell hotel product by making promotion such as rooms with meal and entertainment, rooms with meal and tour or a promotion known as the all in one package. The front office department coordinates with sales and marketing department in term of:

- ☐ The guest histories record
- ☐ Room reservation records
- ☐ Current room availability status
- ☐ Group, corporate and crew bookings
- ☐ Bulk room sales
- ☐ Group and corporate event



TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

5) The role of Front Office department with Security department

Front office staff handles large amount of cash and guest assets everyday at the counter. In fact, the hotel held event and functions such meeting, conference, exhibition, fashion show, annual dinner, private party and this has become a gathering place of some powerful and influence person such as the royals, politicians, socialite, celebrities, academicians, businessman, athletes and many more. Thus, security concern is a primary element to secure the present of these important person in the establishment. Security department provides protection for guests, hotel staff and the properties. The security department provides surveillance and access control for the public area such as the lobby area located near the front desk and guest rooms. Surveillance is normally done through a hidden circuit camera and positioning security guards at various hotel entrances. The security department is also responsible of securing access to guestrooms using electronic door locking system operates through a master control console at the front desk which is wired to every guestroom door. Improved security control by the security department can reduce criminal activity and threat from the inside and outside of the hotel. The security staff will also handle all criminal acts caused by the guest or staff. Other than that, the front office staff convey information about the guest's vehicle number so that the security staff will takes note and do security observation at the parking lot areas.

TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

6) The role of Front Office department with Maintenance department

Front office department will handle various complaints from the guest and staff of the hotel. Thus, the front office department and maintenance communicate on requests for maintenance service and room status. Most complaints are related with problems regarding poor room cooling system, plumbing malfunction, noisy equipment, water leaking, telephone and television malfunction and broken furniture. All reports will be recorded in the front desk log book for repair work order. Maintenance department is responsible for maintaining the appearance of the exterior and interior of the hotel and also responsible for swimming pool cleanliness. Front desk staffs are responsible to monitor the maintenance log book so that the problems will be review by the maintenance personnel. Failing to do so will make the room unsalable and also make the guest dissatisfied with the hotel services. This will cause loss of revenue to the hotel. The Maintenance department help to minimize this loses through repairing all rooms that need fixing.



The Maintenance Staff is checking the Air-Conditioning

TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

7) The role of Front Office department with Sport and Recreation Center

The privilege of being an in-house guests is being able to enjoy using the hotel facilities during their stay. One of the facility offered to the guest is the sport and recreation center. Usually, guest who wants to use sport and recreation facilities will makes booking at the front desk. The front desk is responsible to liaison the sport and recreational department about the guest's requests. Other than that, sport and recreation department needs front office staff to provide information to the guests about the operating hours, facilities available and it location in the property. In some hotel, the sport and recreation center also responsible for handling guest's request of using the swimming pool.

8) The role of Front Office department with Customer Service department

Customer service department consist of concierge, bell desk and valet parking. Concierge will give information to the front desk when asked by the guest. Concierge also will become a personal helper to the VIP. Front desk staff will inform the concierge to handle the guest request such as obtaining tickets for theater, arranging tours, entertainment and many more. Front desk staff will communicate to the bell boy to handle the guest's luggage at the time of arrival and departure, escorting the guests to their rooms on arrival, posting the guest mail and other. Guest in the hotel who is charged for parking service will have this amount charged to their account. The valet service manager will prepared a daily report of parking service and send to front office department for updating in the guest account.

TOPIC 2 : The Role of Front Office in Relation to Other Department

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Mr. Ali is on his honeymoon trip. Based on his reservation, he had request the hotel to prepare several services for his room such as fresh flowers, turn down service and fruit platter during his stay. Identify **TWO (2)** department that need to be informed about Mr. Ali's request.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
2. _____ department is responsible to look over on the guest safety during their stay in the hotel.
3. As an attentive front desk staff, all the guest request need to be communicated well to the specific department. Identify **TWO (2)** example of guest request upon their stay.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
4. List **THREE (3)** type of services that being offered to hotel guest by customer service staff.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. Any problems or complaints from the guests about their room need to be reported to _____ department for immediate action and repair. Failing to action on the guest complaint will cause loss to the hotel revenue.





TOPIC 3: FUNCTION AND DUTIES OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF



Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

SELF PERSONALITY

Most activities involving the hotel guests happened at the counter. Due to this , the front desk staffs should portray a good image and need to have a pleasant personality at all times. It is important in order to build rapport and maintain good relationship with the guests. It is also to give a good image to the hotel which in hope would lead to guest loyalty. In order to have a good self-personality, the staffs need to:

- ☐ Maintain self-image
 - always smile and happy to see others. This show a pleasant self-positive vibes and make others feel warm and welcome.
- ☐ Manage personal grooming
 - able to dress up well by finding the right clothes that tailored to fit the body and use appropriate make-up to enhance self appearance and professional looks.
- ☐ Concerns about personal hygiene
 - always concern and sensitive about personal hygiene by having bath everyday, brushing and flossing the teeth, using deodorant and mouth wash and avoid consuming smelly foods which can incur bad breath and body odor. Other than that, applying hand sanitizer are now become a new regime of personal hygiene.

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

THE FRONT OFFICE STAFF IMAGE (MALE)

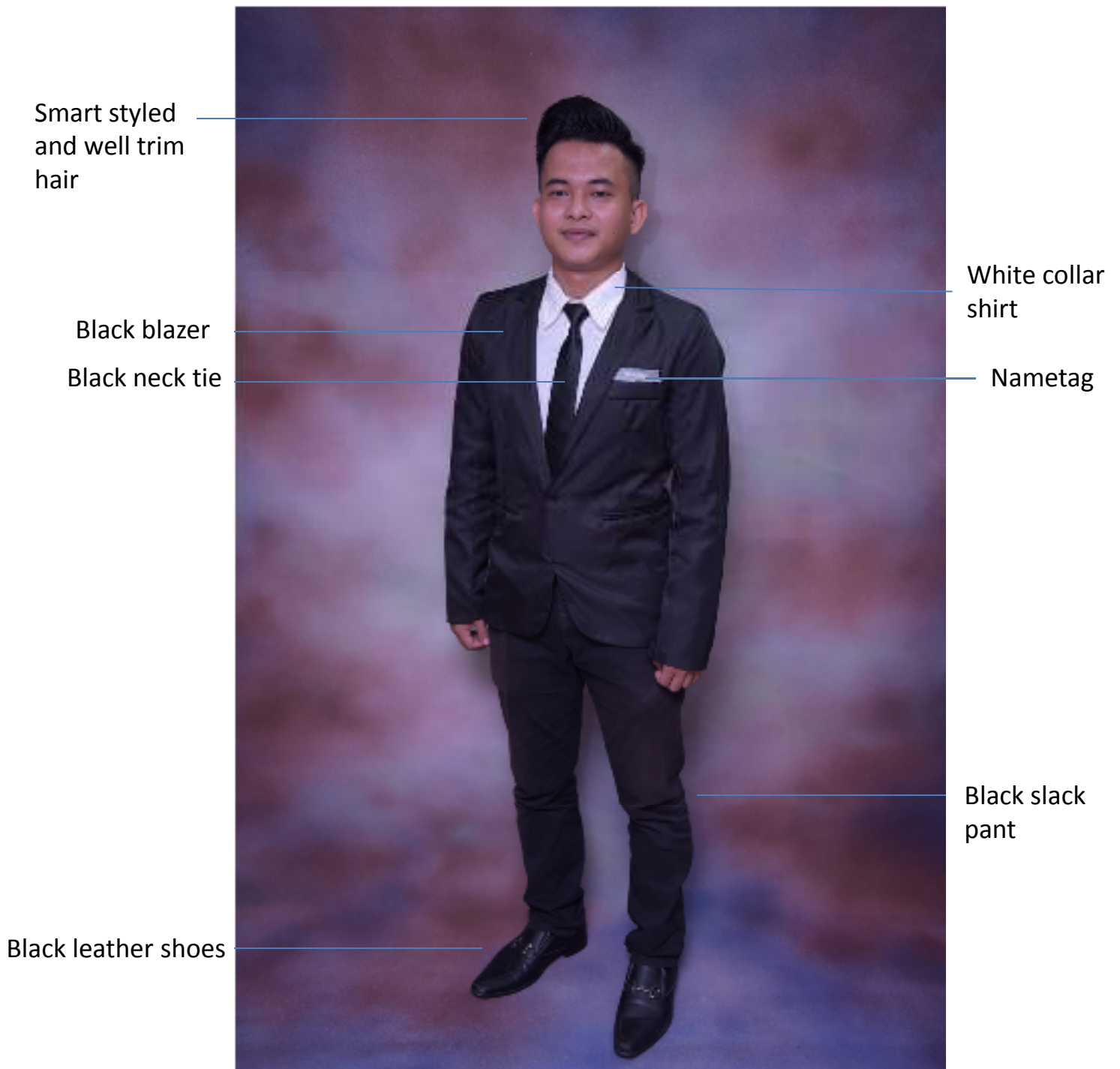


Figure 3.1: Example of Front Office Staff Image (Male)

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

THE FRONT OFFICE STAFF IMAGE (FEMALE)

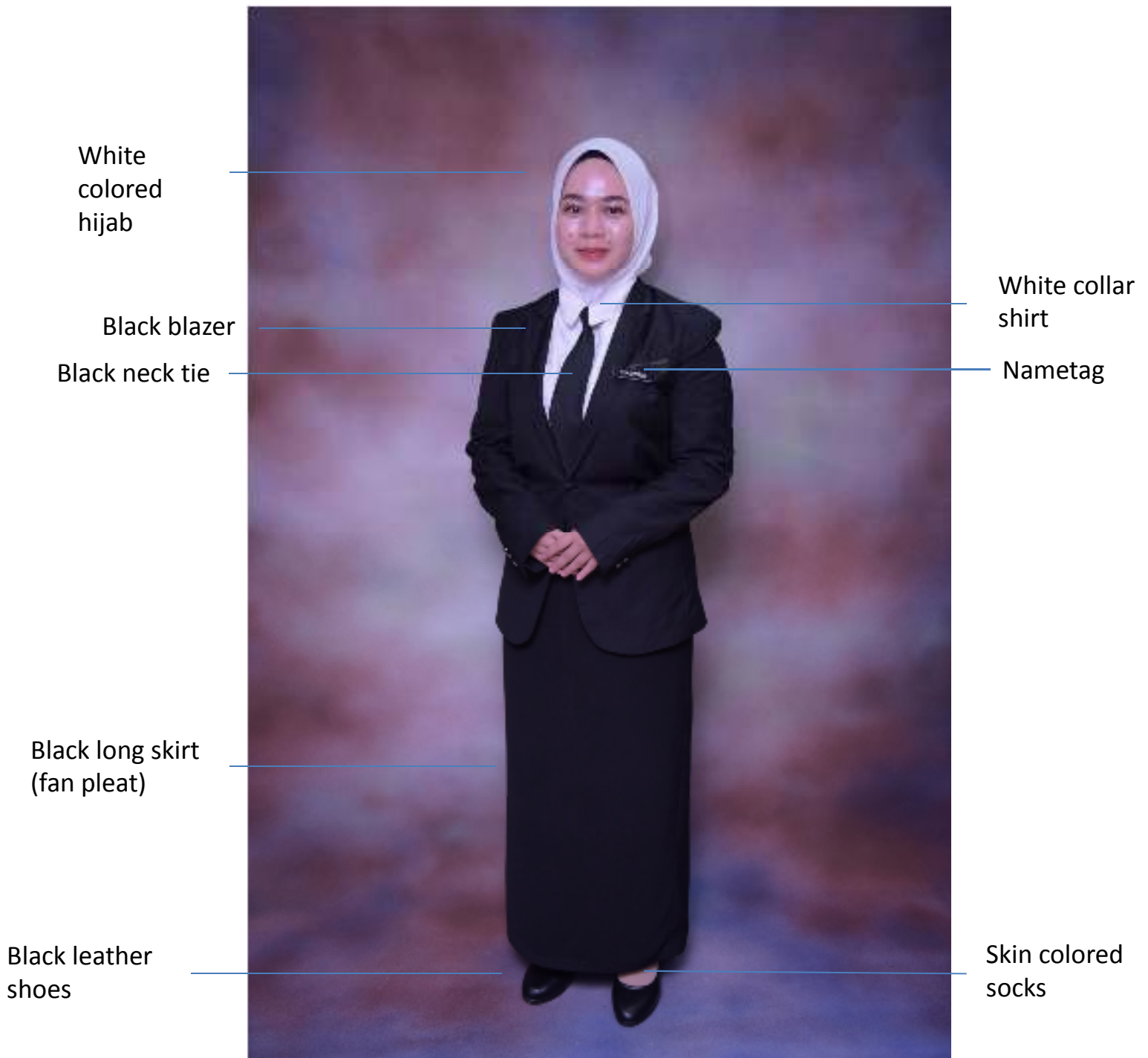


Figure 3.2: Example of Front Office Staff Image (Female)

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

THE FRONT OFFICE STAFF IMAGE (FEMALE)



Figure 3.3: Example of Front Office Staff Image (Female)

THE GOOD IMAGE

The front office staff need to be well prepare all the time while at the counter. This is because, the guest may come to the counter to seek assistant and may have some inquiries and even to lodged a complaint. In order to encounter the challenges of working at the front, the front office staff need to look confident and professional. This can be done by building a good image. A good image will helps build trust and confident between the hotel staff and the guests.

GUIDELINES FOR MALE FRONT OFFICE STAFF:

- ☐ Clean face is a must, avoid having facial hair, nose hair, beard and mustaches
- ☐ Use appropriate face cleanser to wash away the oils and dirt around the face and to avoid acnes and pimples
- ☐ Avoid using hair coloring. Black hair is preferable and accepted
- ☐ Professional, smart looking and stylish haircut is preferable
- ☐ Wear spotless clean and ironed uniform
- ☐ Nametag is a must in order to show self-virtue
- ☐ Regularly trim or cut short the finger nails
- ☐ Appropriate accessory such as hand watch is accepted. Avoid wearing wrist band, necklace, headband or even do the ear, tongue and nose piercing
- ☐ Wear appropriate black belt (the size of the buckle should not too big)
- ☐ Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol, tea and coffee which can cause bad breath and yellowish teeth
- ☐ Use mouth wash or mouth spray to refresh up breath
- ☐ Use light and pleasant smell body spray and perfume

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

GUIDELINES FOR FEMALE FRONT OFFICE STAFF:

- ☐ Clean face is a must, avoid having facial hair and nose hair
- ☐ Use appropriate face cleanser to wash away the oils and dirt around the face and to avoid acnes and pimples
- ☐ Avoid using hair coloring. Black hair is preferable and accepted
- ☐ Bunnet style hair is preferable
- ☐ Well ironed hijab for the muslim
- ☐ Wear spotless clean and ironed uniform
- ☐ Nametag is a must in order to show self-virtue
- ☐ Regularly trim or cut short the finger nails. Avoid coloring the nail and wearing henna
- ☐ Appropriate accessory such as hand watch is accepted. Avoid wearing wrist band, necklace, headband or even do the tongue and nose piercing
- ☐ Wear a professional light make-up using earth tone or natural color
- ☐ Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol, tea and coffee which can cause bad breath and yellowish teeth
- ☐ Use mouth wash or mouth spray to refresh up breath
- ☐ Use light and pleasant smell body spray and perfume



THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AT THE FRONT DESK

Communication is a process of sending information from a person (sender) to another (receiver). Communication process happened with the use of mediums. There are two types of communication:

a) **Verbal communication**

b) **Non-verbal communication**

Both types of communication will effect the way a front office staff communicate with the guest.

☐ **Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication is a way of conveying information by means of talking. In front office department, verbal communication is the typical and formal form of communicating. The front office staff may clarify to the guest about the rooms types, amenities, hotel facilities, room rates and other guest inquiries.

☐ **Non Verbal Communication**

Non-verbal communication is also known as body language. It is the exchange of information by means of sign and to express feelings and emotions of an individual. Other than that, the front office staff might present their body language through body movement, hand gesture and facial expression. Non-verbal communication can be categorized as follows:

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

-Facial expression

The particular look on the individuals face provide signal of agreement, skepticism and disbelief. When confronting with the guest at the counter, the front office staff need to display a professional look and always calm. Natural facial expression and warm smile makes the guest feel welcome.

-Body posture

Body posture refer to the positioning of the body. The nature of working at the front desk counter requires the staff to keep stand most of the time during the shift. Standing straight and the opening of the arm may show some confident level. While handling the guest, make sure to stand up straight and avoid excessive movement that may become distraction.

-The voice tone

The volume, pitch, quality and speech rate of an individual may convey anxiety, confidence, passion and excitement. The front office staff needs to use the right voice tone while talking to the guest. High pitch voice tone may indicate that the staff is not respecting and rude to the guest. Thus the guest might perceived bad impression and misunderstanding toward the staff and the hotel as well.

-Hand gesture

The hand gesture is referring to the movement of hand. Frequent hand movement expresses and individual's approval.

-Clothing and attire

The way a person wears clothing and sets his or her appearance may display of how he or she feel. For example, if the front office staff wearing a clean and well ironed uniform, it may show that the staff is ready and confident to meet the guest at the front desk counter.

SKILLS OF GIVING DIRECTION

One of the job scope of a front office staff is being able to give direction to the guest. The front desk counter is located at the center of the hotel and visible for everyone to see. Thus it is the easiest place for the guest to ask any questions and seek for help. The guest may visit the hotel for the first time. Thus, they may need helps to discover about the hotel surroundings. The front office staff may need to have a wide knowledge of the hotel surrounding including knowing the best place to visit, interesting place with nice view for photo shoot, famous local food to try and good entertainment and hang out spot to suggest to the guest.

TIPS IN GIVING DIRECTION

☐ Knowing the starting point

When giving direction to the guest, make sure to address the starting point so that the guest know where their starting spot. For example: from the hotel lobby or from the hotel building.

☐ Provide a city map

A city map would help to give a better picture and understanding about the overall surrounding of a place. Important information such as names of the roads, places and building are included in the map. Other than that, the guest may find information about the entrance fee, operation hours , local emergency call number, nearby convenient shop and clinics. This valuable information help guest to plan their visit to the intended location and avoiding them from lost in the city.

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

☐ Identify the distance

The front office staff may state the distance in order to describe of how far the guest need to travel to the intended location. The front office staff may describe the distance in kilometer or meter.

☐ State the time duration

By stating the time duration, the guest can estimate the distance of places to visit. It should be convey in hours or minutes.

☐ Recognize the name of the road

The front office staff may also state the name of the road for easy reference. The guest must look for the road signage. Example of names of the road in Melaka are, Jalan Bendera, Jalan Melaka Raya, Jalan Kota Laksamana, Jalan Hang Tuah, Jalan Ong Kim Wee and many others.

☐ Identify famous or iconic land marks

It is wise to state the iconic land marks when direct the guest to the location. Famous city land marks become an iconic symbol and easy reference for the guest to identify. Example of famous land marks in Melaka are, St. Francis Xavier Church, A Famosa Fort, Melaka Strait Mosque, Menara Taming Sari, The Red Square and many others.

☐ Use simple instruction

The front office staff may needs to use simple instruction in order to make sure the guest understand well during the explanation. Use instruction such as “turn to the right, “turn to the left”, “go straight” and other simple command.

SKILLS OF HANDLING TELEPHONE CALL

The front office staff communicate regularly with the guest either face to face conversation at the counter or through a telephone call. Handling a telephone call requires some skills that need to be learn by any front desk staff. The sales of a hotel room depends on how the front office staff manage to communicate well when answering the call from the potential guest.

TIPS IN HANDLING TELEPHONE CALL

☐ Always ready

The front office staff need to be ready all the time to receive a telephone call. Allocate stationeries such as pen, memo pad and pencil to write down any important messages.

☐ Answer the call on time

Avoid rushing when answering the telephone call. It is advise to pick up the call by the third ringing.

☐ Greet and thanking the caller

When greeting the caller, the front office staff must aware about the time of the day. Remember to greet using appropriate time of the day such as “**Good Morning**”, “**Good Afternoon**”, “**Good Evening**” or “**Salam Sejahtera**”. Don’t forget to show some appreciation to the caller by saying “**thank you for calling Casa Bayu Hotel**”.

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

☐ Self introduce

The front office staff needs to introduce self to the caller. The caller might feel welcome and at ease when he/she know to whom he/she is speaking to. Thus, it would lead to a clear and smooth telephone conversation.

☐ Speak politely and use the right voice tone

Speak politely and avoid shouting when talking to the guest. Improper voice tone will incur miscommunication and the guest might feel angry or upset.

☐ Show courtesy when ending the telephone call

When a telephone conversation comes to the end, the front office staff needs to once again appreciate the caller by saying thank you. Don't forget to offer any further help and remind the caller that the hotel are looking forward to welcome him/her. Make sure that the caller is first to hang up the telephone.



PROPER GREETING OF HANDLING TELEPHONE CALL

☐ Internal telephone call

Internal telephone call is a call within the hotel establishment. Internal calls consist of telephone calls from staff from other departments.

For instance: Sales and marketing department staff making a telephone calls to front office department about the group booking. Telephone calls from *in-house* guests are also part of the internal telephone calls. Treat staff and guests equally when handling the telephone calls.

Example: ***“Good evening, Thank you for calling front desk, Sophea speaking, how may I help you?”***

☐ External telephone call

External telephone call is a call from outside of the hotel. An external call consists of calls from prospective guests who want to know further about the hotel offerings. This is a very important call because the decision whether the potential guests want to make reservation with the hotel depends on how the hotel staff treats the caller.

Example: ***Good Morning. Thank you for calling Casa Bayu Hotel. This is Adam speaking, how may I assist you sir/madam?”***

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

☐ Transferring the telephone call

Transferring a telephone call happens when a caller wants to speak with the person from other departments or guest in another room. The front office staff must be able to remember all the extensions number of every department in the hotel so that the transferring process can be done easily.

Example: ***“Excuse me sir/madam, I will transfer your call to Mrs. Faziah in the Sales and marketing department. Please hold on for a moment”***

☐ On hold the telephone call

When the line is busy, the staff must ask the caller whether he wants to leave a message or wait until the line is no longer busy. Make sure the caller does not wait for a long time. Check every 30 seconds and offer to take down the message if the caller refuses to wait any longer.

Example: ***“I am sorry sir/madam, the telephone line is quite busy at the moment, do you still want to be on hold or can I take any messages?”***

☐ To end the telephone call

When ending a telephone call, politely express appreciation to the caller and offer further assistance.

Example: ***Thank you again for calling Casa Bayu Hotel. Is there anything else that I can help you with?***

TOPIC 3 : Function and Duties of Front Office Staff

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Miss Zarith is the Front Office Manager at Casa Bayu Hotel. She involves in the introductory course for the new front office staff. Identify **FIVE (5)** guidelines of front office staff that Miss Zarith should inform them.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

2. Recognize **TWO (2)** types of communication.

- a. _____
- b. _____

3. List **THREE (3)** guidelines in giving direction.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4. Write the proper telephone greeting for an external call.

5. Write the proper telephone greeting of transferring the telephone call.





TOPIC 4: ROOMS



Rooms

THE TYPE OF HOTEL ROOMS

The main contribution of a hotel revenue is from the sales of the rooms. The hotel needs to ensure that the sales of the rooms is high and able to achieves 100% occupancy everyday. In order to accomplish this target, the hotel offers different types of rooms to fits the needs of different types of guest that come to the hotel.



Figure 4.1: The Type of Hotel Rooms

❑ Suite room

Suite room is consider as the most exclusive and expensive types of room. This room is offered in order to fulfill the needs of wealthy peoples. The size of the room is large and spacious which consist of meeting room, bartender counter, *ensuite* bathroom, kitchen area, games rooms and even a theater room. The room details and the interior design of this room is finely designed by professional artists. The furnishing and fixtures of this room are exclusive, expensive and exotic as high craftsmanship is needed. The hotel normally offers a king-sized bedding. The linen used for this room usually come from a highly imported and fine quality of fabrics. The room is located at the best available and breath taking view.



Figure 4.2: Example of a Suite Room

❑ Deluxe room

The hotel may charge a maximum rate for this types of room. Deluxe room normally has a regular size of sleeping room. This room is designed to meets the needs of the guest who come to the hotel on business purpose. The types of bedding includes queen or king-size bed. The room offers a high level of comfort, highly speed network for *in-room* conference and scenic view.



Figure 4.3: Example of a Deluxe Room



☐ Superior room

The hotel may charge a moderate price for Superior room. The bedding includes double bed, queen or king-sized bed. The room normally equipped with basic room facilities such satellite television, air-conditioning, safe deposit box and a mini bar.



Figure 4.4: Example of a Superior Room

☐ Standard room

Standard room represents the hotel's minimum rate for a normal-size sleeping room. The bedding consists of one queen bed or two double beds.



Figure 4.5: Example of a Standard Room

❑ Family room

Another types of room offered by the hotel is the Family room. This types of room is normally famous among seaside hotel operator as the location attract families to come by. The bedding includes a queen or a king-sized bed and a single bed. The room capacity is suitable to accommodate 4 adult persons or 2 adult 2 children. The room normally equipped with basic room facilities such satellite television, air-conditioning, safe deposit box and a mini bar. Besides that, the hotel may offers extra bed with some charges apply.



Figure 4.6: Example of a Family Room

THE GUESTROOM FACILITIES

The guestroom facilities are one of the important element to ensure the guest's comfort and satisfaction level during their stay. Examples of guestroom facilities that the hotel provide in a rooms are:

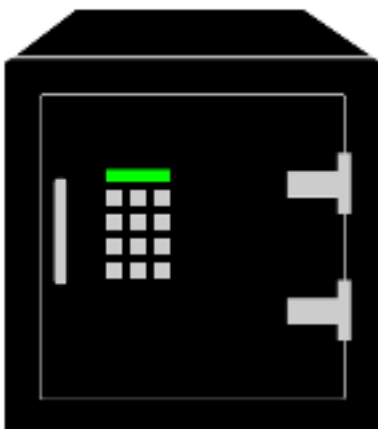
- ☐ Air-conditioning
- ☐ Mini bar
- ☐ Safe deposit box
- ☐ Satellite television
- ☐ DVD/CD player
- ☐ Telephone



Television



Telephone



Safe deposit box



Air-conditioning

THE GUESTROOM AMENITIES

The guestroom amenities are free items offered to the guest and placed in the room. Examples of guestroom amenities that the hotel provide are:

- ☐ Writing pad
- ☐ Postcard
- ☐ Envelope
- ☐ Pen or pencil
- ☐ Mineral water
- ☐ Complimentary coffee, tea, sugar and creamer
- ☐ Bedroom slippers



Writing pad



Bedroom slippers



Envelope



Mineral water



Pen

THE BATHROOM AMENITIES

The bathroom amenities are free items offered to the guest and placed in the bathroom. Examples of bathroom amenities that the hotel provide are:

- ☐ Shower gel
- ☐ Hand lotion
- ☐ Tooth brush
- ☐ Shaver
- ☐ Shower cap
- ☐ Cotton bud
- ☐ Hair comb



Hair comb



Hand lotion



Tooth brush



Shower gel



Cotton bud

THE TYPE OF ROOM RATES

In order to cater the different needs of guest segment , hotel usually offer different type of room rates. This initiative would give benefit to the guests and the hotel as well. Here are the type of room rates offered by the hotel:

☐ Rack Rate

Rack rate is refer to the hotel's standard or normal price for a room. This means that there are no discount or reduction given for this type of rates. Rack rate is quote for accommodation only and the price exclude the meals charge.

☐ Group or Tour Rate

Group or tour rate is usually given to the tour operator company or an organization where they reserve hotel accommodation in a large amount at a time. The hotel offers 20-25% off from the normal rack rate. This offering is given to the tour operator company as to appreciate them of their commitment to brings business to the hotel.

☐ Airline Rate

Airline rate is given to the airline crews as to recognize the contributions of airline company which to brings peoples from all around the world to our country and helps the local tourism development.



☐ Government Rate

Government rate is quoted for individual who works in the government agencies. Sometimes the government servant has to go outstation or travel due to work requirement. When the government servant travel for work visit for instance, they are given a travel allowance to help them with their meals, accommodation and other expenses.

☐ Corporate Rate

Corporate rate is given to the businessperson. It can be divided into frequent stay businessman (in which this kind of guest visits the hotel by weekly or monthly basis) and the employees of a company that has contracted a rate with the hotel.



THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE ROOM RATES

When a guest staying at the hotel, they need to know that there factors that will affect the room rates. The room rate quoted may be differ due to breakfast charges, size of the room, room location and view, amenities offered and guest services.

☐ Breakfast charges

In most hotel, the room rate that inclusive breakfast charges will be higher price compare to the room rate without breakfast charges. The breakfast charges will cover for two person. During check-in at the counter, the front office staff will print out the breakfast voucher for the guest. Each breakfast voucher normally has different code number and consist information such guest's name and room number. The front office staff will remind the guest to bring the voucher when they want to have breakfast at the coffee house.



❑ The size of the room

The larger and bigger size of the room, the room rates will be higher. Most 5 star and 6 star rated hotel have a huge and very spacious room size. Besides that, the room attach to different part or areas which normally the living hall, the bedrooms, the kitchen, the patio or balcony, the conference room and others. The room areas are big enough in order to cater the needs of rich peoples. So that is the reason of why most 5 star and 6 star hotel charge their room rate very high.



❑ The room location and view

The room location and view is another factor that affect the room rate. Hotel guest normally would request to have a room with scenic and beautiful view. Such view are ocean view, mountain view, city view, garden view, lake view, river view and others. In some hotel, the guest need to pay extra charge for the room with the view. This is why the room rate is much higher compare to the room without view.



❑ The amenities

The room with extra amenities will usually higher price compare to the room with basic amenities. Basic amenities included in a room are mineral water, pen or pencil, writing pad, postcard, sewing kits, bar soap, shampoo, toothbrush, hair comb, shaver, cotton bud and shower cap. The hotel also offers extra amenities for the guest to ensure that they are having a pleasant stay. Example of extra amenities are bathrobe, bedroom slippers, hand moisturizer, hair conditioner, perfumed shower gel, face scrub and others.



❑ Guest service

A hotel that offers the best of services like spa and wellness center, banquet halls and specialty restaurant will charge a higher room rate comparing to the hotel with limited services. 5-star hotels provide more personalized guest services as to meet the standard quality of the hotel and to satisfy the need of the guests.



REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Identify **FOUR (4)** types of room available in a hotel.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
2. Differentiate between **guestroom amenities** and **bathroom amenities**.
3. Provide **FIVE (5)** examples of guestroom amenities and bathroom amenities

Guestroom amenities	Bathroom amenities
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____
c. _____	c. _____
d. _____	d. _____
e. _____	e. _____

4. Identify **FOUR (4)** types of hotel room rates.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
5. List **FIVE (5)** factors affecting the room rates.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____



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Marni Binti Md. Zali is a Lecturer at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Politeknik Merlimau (PMM). She has been teaching for 12 years. She holds a Master of Hospitality Management from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM Shah Alam), a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Hotel Management) from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM Shah Alam) and Diploma in Food Service Management (UiTM Dungun, Terengganu).



Mas Azlina Binti Mohd Alias is a Lecturer at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Politeknik Merlimau (PMM). She has been teaching for 19 years. She holds a Master of Education (TVET) from Kolej Universiti Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn (KUiTTHO), a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Hotel Management) from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM Shah Alam) and Diploma in Hotel Management (UiTM Shah Alam).

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